

**The Carolina DX
Association**



The Pileup



HAPPY HOLIDAY FROM CDXA

Carolina DX Association



NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1993

BILL TAYLOR - KD4IL - EDITOR

CDXA Christmas Party at the Branding Iron on Highway 21 just across Catawba River Bridge. Monday, December 13 at 6:30. (\$13.00 per person) See more details on page 9.

PREZ' PONDERINGS

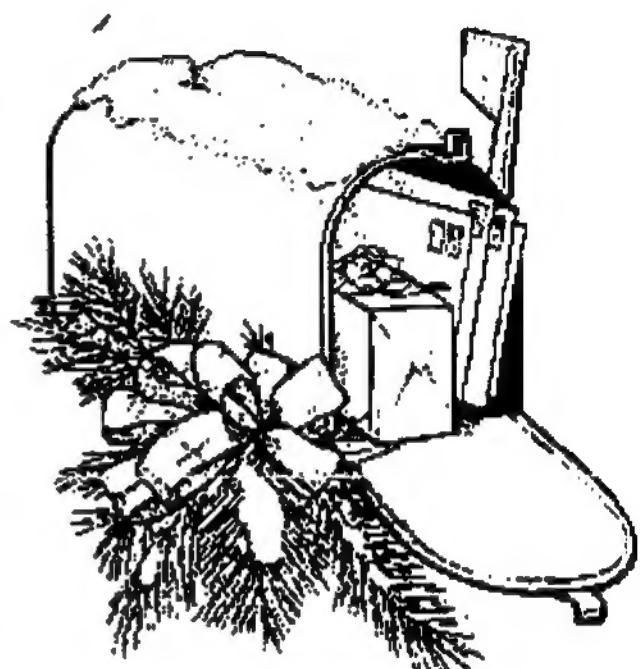
Hey DXer's! It is that time of year again. Last minute antenna tweaks and construction/erection efforts are filling our weekends when leaf raking is done. I'm thinking in Charlotte though that it is never done!

The CDXA Christmas Party (at the Branding Iron in Rock Hill) on Monday, 13 Dec 93, will start glass tipping about 6:30PM and we will eat at 7:30PM. Elections for our 1994 leadership will take place about 8:15PM followed by a really enjoyable and entertaining program brought to us by Ken Winston, WA40BO, TT80BO, TY80BO, our own Yarn spinner and salesman! So bring your favorite social partner to the Branding Iron and enjoy the fellowship. Talk In on 147.18MHz.

The Wednesday gatherings at Shoney's Midtown Square Mall are still fun and filling. There is always a good number of us who get together for lunch at Noon and discuss anything and everything. I, for one, really look forward to seeing everyone there and sharing technical talk and funny stuff. We are still laughing at Frank's joke!

The CDXA Repeater is really an improvement come true this year. We are now running the amplifier also. It can now not hear, but be heard in our outlying areas. Don't forget to take advantage of the CTCSS tone of 77Hz if you would like to monitor and only hear the CDXA Repeater. That is really handy near the Gold Building or downtown! The tone is not required for transmission through the repeater. A big thanks to all who put in a lot of time and effort to bring this project into being!

In closing, I would like to thank all the other officers and members of CDXA for honoring me by letting me serve you this past year. It has truly been a pleasure. And for the upcoming year, there is so much to look forward to. Murph will bring us a Technical program in January, continued Wednesday luncheons and the Charlotte Hamfest, just to name a few. There is



Notice

CDXA Dues are now due for the year 1994. Your mailing label indicates what year you are paid for- take note! The current rate for CDXA dues are \$30 for packet using members and \$15 otherwise. Dues payments should be sent to:

W4UNP, Bill Jennings
630 Whitepine Drive
Catawba, SC 29704

also work proceeding to improve our PacketCluster, firing up a digipeater at the Carowinds site and other technical improvements. Got ideas? Share them! As a team, we are unbeatable! 73 Joe WD4R

CDXA ANNUAL PICNIC

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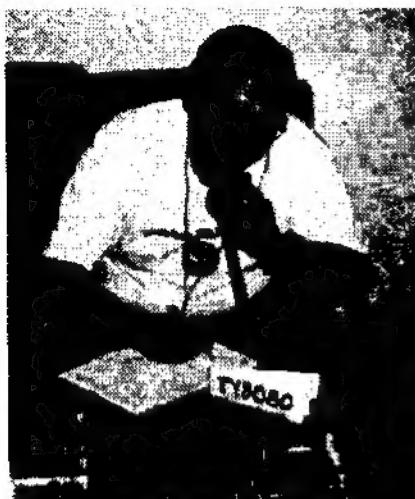




WA4OBO "Rides" Again!

September 26, 1993

BENIN TRIP — SEPTEMBER 1993



Benin was originally known as Dahomey. It is on the coast of what was formerly French West Africa. On one side is Togo (5V), on the other side is Nigeria (5N2), Mali (TZ), and Burkino Faso (XT) on the north. The northern border is formed by the Niger River, one of Africa's most important navigable rivers. In Bamako in Mali, the Niger is nearly a mile wide! Benin is a "slip of land" that is about 80 miles wide and 600 miles long. It has a railroad that runs from Cotonou to Parakou, and a very good road system when compared to other places that I have visited in Africa. One of the last really well managed game parks in Africa is in the north of Benin on the border along the Niger River. The population is about 3,000,000 and the main languages are Fon, the native language and French. Agriculture and mining are the main industries. Cotton as well as rice are important crops for export to other countries in both Africa as well as Europe.

Until 1991, the first year that I visited Benin on business, the country was dominated by the Chinese, Russian, and Cuban communists. In mid 1991, an uprising in the north finally found its way south to the Capital, Porto Nuovo, and to the main city Cotonou. For 2 years now the country has been run by a military dictatorship, that has reformed the land and banking structure of the country that allows the likes of me to enter the country and do business. Elections were held about 5 months ago for the new government that will be sworn in January of next year. Most of those in power were elected in the most recent election to continue in the jobs that were given them in the take over of the country from the communists.

Having given a bit of background on the country and the people, I need to get on with the trip! The trip started with a bang. After an uneventful flight to Washington Dulles International airport, we were advised by Air France our carrier to Africa that the flight to Paris was to be 5 hours late, giving us no chance to catch the flight onward to Cotonou, Benin! Disaster already. The main problem was that another plane to Cotonou was not scheduled for 3 days from Paris. It never occurred to us that the luggage would be lost, after checking it only to Paris Charles Degaulle airport. Lo and behold a minor miracle occurred that allowed us to make the flight to Cotonou, but without baggage! All at Air France in Paris assured us that the luggage would be on the next Air Afrique or Air France flight going to Cotonou. So with a sinking feeling in my stomach, I left not only my luggage, but all of my radio gear in the airport in Paris, knowing full well that it was the last that I would ever see of certainly the radio stuff, but possibly my clothes as well. Paris is noted for being able to lose baggage better than most airports in the world!!

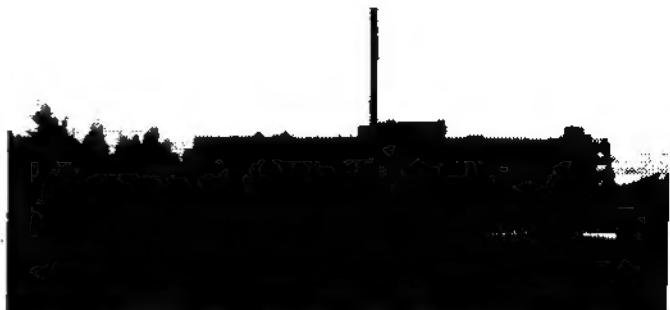
Our flight to Cotonou was of about 6.5 hours duration in an old Boeing 747 that is 1/2 cargo and 1/2 passengers. We were just glad to be aboard and not stranded in Paris with absolutely nothing to do for a couple of days. After landing in Cotonou on schedule, we were met by business associates from Parakou and taken to the hotel after filing our missing bag report.

The rainy season is over now but there are still afternoon thunder showers that cause great pools of water all over the city. Cotonou is directly on the Atlantic Ocean with a fairly large, well equipped port that offers not only container service but bulk service to everywhere on recognized carriers worldwide. We deal with Torm Lines and Maersk Lines, both containers seen on our roads quite frequently.

Most of you know that I was granted a license about 6 months ago to use my radio in Benin. Everything was in place for me to get on the air on arrival.



Along main road between Cotonov and Paraxov in the city of SAVE



Sheraton hotel on Ocean in Cotonov. G5RV on roof to left of the "S" on front of Hotel

The radio in Paris took care of that event quite nicely, but so did the government and the recent elections. One of the gents deposed was the Defense Minister and the Minister of Telecommunications. When I went to get my license verified by the new minister, I was informed that not only would my radio gear have to be inspected, but also I would need to visit the new minister and get the license reissued on a temporary basis. A great start for our trip. I told our business associates that without the license in hand I was not leaving the Sheraton where we were staying until the luggage arrived. They immediately started work with the defense ministry to get the meeting set for the radio and antenna inspection on arrival of the luggage, and with the PTT to get the new temporary license. Before the baggage arrived, the police were in the hotel lobby in mass! An inspector and three flunkies were there to examine the radio. It had not arrived! The next day the same thing and still no radio. Finally, the luggage did arrive along, amazingly with all of the radio gear and the inspection was begun. They insisted on hearing the radio play, so nothing would do but to get the hotel to let me string the antenna along the roof. Permission was sought and given. Mr. Phillip Riant, the hotel assistant manager even gave me a couple of maintenance men to help string the G5RV in the most favorable position. With that having been done, there was nothing to do but begin transmitting. The police were very satisfied since I did not even bother the TV in the room which must have been 20 years old!!! Frankly, I think they were lustng for my Yaesu FT 990. They obviously gave the gear a good report, for on the next morning, I was called by Mr. Flavien Bachabi, the director of the PTT to say that the temporary license was issued and that we could pick it up whenever we wished. We reached the PTT office in record time to get the license to find that there was a typo that had me using the call TYBOBO. When I pointed this out to the director, he quickly said no problem, and with the swoop of one pen stroke I was officially TY8OBO. The license was good for the time there until the new minister could take office and sign the permanent license good for life! Needless to say, I was very pleased with all the events that had taken place in such a short time. Africa is one of the most slow paced, wait forever places that you can imagine, but with the help of everyone, we moved mountains to get me on the air from the hotel, and to have the proper license in hand that would cause, hopefully, no problems when I returned with the ARRL.

My reasons for being in Benin sound like they revolve around Hamming so far, but really, it is not that way at all. In 1991, we discovered an abandoned textile industry left behind in the pull out of the French and the Belgians who left hurriedly with the onset of Communism in the early 70's. The new government of Benin sought our help in trying to determine if the industry was salvable or not.

On our first trip, we were amazed by the great condition of the 2 mills that are in Benin. Very little had to be done to get them running at mostly full output. The difficult part was to convince customers that a slip of a

country like Benin on the West coast of Africa could make, and more important deliver on time, fabrics that we could use here in the USA. As it turns out one can and one cannot. The reason for my trip this time was to work out the freight to the USA, both east and west coast. Having done this task, and then moving on to other items was to go to the mill to give them the encouragement needed to increase production by about 20%. While waiting for the driver for a day, I spent most of the night and the early morning on the radio from the Sheraton. About 200 contacts were made in Cotonou and the balance were made in Parakou. On Friday morning early, our party left for Parakou in the north at the end of the railroad line. I left the G5RV on the roof of the Sheraton, loaded the radio gear and my overnight bag in the back of the truck for the 6 hour ride to Parakou.

The trip there is very scenic! Benin has a lot of everything that you expect in Africa. There are many lagoons that are inland about 2 - 10 KM from the coast where people make their living by fishing or out of the water. From the flat coast, the ground rises gradually to about 1,500 feet in the middle to mountains in the north. There are many of the plains that are known as savannahs in Africa with the low growing trees and scrub brushes that are seen in many movies where the animals are grazing. Here among these trees, the Benin people do their farming of Cassava, yams, peanuts (know as ground nuts there), and the ever present millet and corn. Pineapple, coconut, papaya, bread fruit, and mangos grow wild over most of the country.



There are many palm trees that are grown just for the palm oil that is produced in large quantities in Benin. From about 50 miles north of Cotonou there begins to appear huge outcroppings of rocks that run almost the entire length of Benin. These extend, I am told all the way to the Niger River in the north.

On the way to Parakou we went through a village that I was told was the birthplace of Voodoo, one of the three major religions of Benin. The other in order of importance is Moslem and Roman Catholic. All of the other protestant religions that are most known to us are present, but in very small numbers. Many missionaries are in Benin, but I believe that they struggle to make converts today. Besides voodoo, slavery was first started here with the export of people to work the fields in the new world as well as in other parts of Africa. With the advent of slavery to the new world, the spread of voodoo was inevitable. Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean island countries have been thought as the cradle of voodoo, but not so, for surely Benin is and it is still practiced in large numbers there. There is a voodoo market place for amulets and juju's that are used in the religion, both personally and by the practicing churches. It is a very interesting place.

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There is both wealth and poverty in Benin, but all of the people with whom I have had contact in the rural areas as well as the cities are proud and seem happy with their lot in life. Rural dwellers are mostly like all other "gathering" Africans. They farm, hunt and scrape the life that their ancestors before them had and they have today. The small villages may or may not have a well. Mostly there is only electricity in the cities, and certainly there are no sewers or running water or TV in the bush or in the villages. Clothing is meager in the bush as well as the cities. Women wear bright colored wraps and skirts with little else. Men have gone mostly to the west for their clothing - slacks and tee shirts. I have not heard what the average per capita income is, but I suspect that it is very low. The mill in which we have done our best work pays its personnel about \$20 per week and this is a high wage for the area of Parakou. Needs are covered by this, and usually the wife and the children are farming while the father or man of the family is working at the mill. The mill in Parakou was built by the French and then taken over by the Belgians. It is very modern for Africa and is capable of manufacturing fabrics that are equal to or better than any other in the world. There are about 600 working in this mill, manufacturing what is known in the USA as "Bull Denim", undyed but bleached denim fabric for garment dyeing. We are shipping about 250,000 meters per month to the USA for Gap, Penny, Target and

others. The minister of industry stated recently that this business is the salvation of the Benin textile industry. I would not go that far, but our shipments are the largest export out of the country in both dollars and container volume! For a small country like Benin this business with the USA is a significant portion of their country's hard currency intake.

In Parakou, I stayed with our team in one of the guest houses in the mill complex. The house is one of 3 bedrooms, one bath a kitchen, sitting room and porch surrounding the house. It is surrounded also by large trees. The lighting had taken care of the Cushcraft R5 antenna that we had installed on the nearby water tower so I was left with the G5RV and the Carolina Windom that I brought with me. I could not hear on the G5RV so I was left with the Windom. It was hung in a flat top configuration facing NNW/SSE. We were very fortunate to be able to displace a few of the huge bats in the trees with the wire and the nylon cord that we used to hoist the antenna. The antenna was about 40 feet off the ground and in the clear for the most part. Then the fun began from the afternoon after work at about 1700 GMT would get on the radio and would be there until 0400 GMT. The band was particularly good to the west coast and I worked about 200 stations in 6/7 land of the about 1100 total worked. I felt good about this after being criticized for not standing by enough from Tchad for the west coast. Good runs were had on both 20 and 15 as well as 17 meters. The Yaesu 990 worked like a champ and without the auto tuner, I would have been lost. Before I left Charlotte, I set the radio up on the 220 power supply, and had absolutely no problems in power or performance with the radio or the Carolina Windom.



As all of you know my main prowess in ham radio is my astute ability to create and handle in the most proper manner — a big CW pileup! The definition of the big pileup is more than one station calling at a time. I felt that while on 30 meters, I could hear the world snickering and giggling about the quality of the CW from TY8OBO! In all I worked about 30 stations and then ran like hell, there were more than one station calling at a time and I could not hear a peep of a signal that I could understand. To those who were not fortunate enough to get me in the log on CW, have no fear, I will be back in TY8 land in early December for an all out effort on CW — at least 45 in the log!!! Hi Hi Hi!

As always most hams all over the world are pretty courteous, but there will always be a few bad apples in the barrel! We only had a few that we knew were upset, but guys on the next day would say to me "did you hear the noise on your frequency?" Obviously I did not. Working split makes handling the pileups pretty simple. At first it was awesome, but as we got into the evening, the numbers starting clicking right along. My best hour was on 20 meters where I worked 112 stations, the second best was on 15 where I ran 95 stations in the hour. On a wire with no amplifier, I think that is pretty good! Many of the calls I had to dig out of the mud and it takes time. One of the guys in our team said to me if he heard TANGO YANKEE 8 OSCAR BRAVO OSCAR one more time at 0345 in the morning, he was going to destroy the radio and pull the antenna down! We have already got my own private guest house for the December trip. I hope to have an amplifier, a repaired R5 verticle and a house from which to transmit that will not bother others. The noise level in Benin was higher than in Tchad. I could not hear a single signal on 80 meters and 40 was pretty tough.

In all I worked about 1200 contacts in the three afternoon and evenings. The license has already been approved by the ARRL and cards are flocking in for the contacts. About 300 so far and only back a week! Back again in December with hopefully no lost luggage in Paris and no lost days on the radio.

73 & Good DX, Ken TY8OBO/TT8OBO

The Unfortunate Ones

The guy to feel sorry for in today's ham radio is the non DXer. Nothing will bring a tear to your eye, or cause you to get that proverbial "lump in the throat" quicker than listening to someone actually rag-chewing at the bottom of 80M on a cold, clear winter's night as over-the-pole Asians roll in. Or actually watching a tv show during a DX contest, or getting out in the yard or up on the roof, working around the house. Hamming means nothing to these types. They're the ones who just bought a new bass boat, or built a tennis court, improved their handicap, or even planted a garden. Hamming means nothing to them. They know nothing of gray line propagation, skew path, or early morning long path.

You have to feel sorry for them. They're so relaxed, so laid back in their own little worlds of 2M FM, RTTY, ATV, of casual operating and rag-chewing you're almost forced to cry out in pain. What do they know of the agony of pileups? No multi-pole CW filters cascaded in their receivers. No mad dash to the mailbox hoping a QSL from Aves Island has finally arrived for these hams.

No, these poor guys get on the air and actually call CQ! They're on the air, talking about everything under the sun, for hours. Their coax isn't even warm. Some of them actually say out loud how much they enjoy ham radio. It's pretty pathetic.

Every ham, regardless of license class, should chase DX. No one should be immune from the wonderful experience of achieving the coveted DXCC Award, especially with all its endorsements, buttons, pins, and plaques. The great memories of hearing DX stations only working Europe, Japan or the West Coast (or the East Coast should you happen to live in California). The joy you feel after spending all morning searching (actually tuning around) for some elusive DX (no matter where; you haven't worked it yet!), finally giving up and going on with your life (in whatever capacity), only to find out the next day he showed up 10 or 20 minutes later. The excitement experienced with packet (you always knew VHF was good for something) until that first big pileup when all of America was calling, so you did too, working your 37th 5B4. The rush (literal as well as figurative) out to the curb, especially on Saturday—the one day of the week when you're normally at home when the mailman comes—looking for that special QSL. The calm satisfaction you feel looking at the stock exchange listings in the newspaper, knowing your linear was "Made in the USA" and you are doing your small part (okay, medium-sized part) to help our country's economy. And the swell expression your wife (girlfriend, significant other, whatever) wore as you kissed goodbye and headed down to the hamshack early Friday night before that big contest weekend.

Let's not forget the quiet satisfaction you felt as your DX stature grew, and you became one of the anointed—possessing the basic award festooned with endorsements. Then the various mode and band-country awards. The wonder you felt as you realized your old 3-element tribander wasn't enough anymore. The sorrow as you knew your Heathkit gear was no longer adequate. The funny feeling you experienced as you looked over your kids at breakfast one morning, knowing you had missed their school play but caught Bouvet when it first came on. The great feeling of "togetherness" you felt when you gave the XYL her very own Klein climbing belt on your anniversary. I pity the ham who doesn't have memories and experiences like these—the guy who thinks DX on 40 is a W6—and doesn't even know any better.

For instance, what kind of shack is it without piles of Callbooks, old DX bulletins, stacks and stacks of the "GO list", maps, atlases, sunrise-sunset tables, 2M spotting gear as well as packet radios, to say nothing of a full-duplicate station right beside the main rig? Pretty spartan, I'd say. And how about that computer? Today's DX ham has to have a computer, with all the hardware

he can muster, with software to match. (Software guaranteed to increase or improve: contest scores; antenna patterns and gain; logging efficiency; and rig modifications. Software designed to replace: maps, atlases; tables, and keyers, both CW and voice.) You get the idea; if today's station doesn't begin to look like the bridge of the Enterprise, it isn't suited for today's DX man.

How about some of those unique feelings of reward you can experience as a DXer? Like staying awake Monday morning during a staff meeting your boss had to call after you worked the DX contest for all 48 hours? Or the special joy you felt unraveling the mysteries of RS-232 with your new radio? (You, who remember actually drawing a Colpitts oscillator schematic on your General class exam. You, who remembers SSB when it was something new and different.) Shouting out loud when ZA finally came back on the air and you worked them before anyone else in town. (Of course you stayed home from work. Didn't everyone?) These are the times a DXer treasures, moments forever etched in memory (these are the in-your-heart kind, not RAM). These are the stories that get drawn out at Dayton, late at night standing in smoke-filled corridors. These are the things you remember when the sunspots decline and you start looking over catalog prices of taller towers. This is what causes tears to come to your eyes later on, when you are actually UP that tower, installing a bigger 40M beam. These are the things you remember when the line noise goes way up each summer and someone finally goes to Andaman, which you need on 80M, or when someone in your neighborhood fires up their portable welder (or whatever) and wipes out the whole band. Aren't you a better ham for all that? Of course you are!

The non-DXer lives a life of boredom, accentuated with moments of social ease, familial friendliness, fame, laughter, and probable business success. He contributes nothing to the DX bands. The non-DXer knows little of real hamming, and is blissfully unaware of his lack of knowledge. Simple examination and observation (try this at the next hamfest) will point him out to you. He's the one with a suntanned, smiling face, usually laughing and enjoying himself. He often looks rested, and relaxed, almost youthful. It simply isn't natural.

If he only knew the joys of chasing DX. Then he'd be like that fellow over there, the little skinny balding guy with the gray skin poring over the vacuum variables, munching anti-acid pills—a DXer!

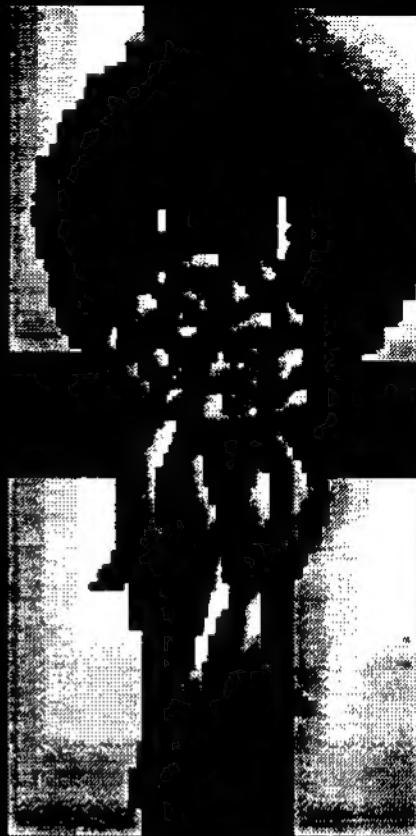
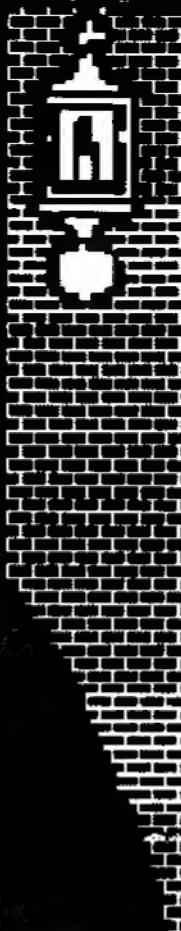
—WZ3Q

WZ3Q used to be WA8MAZ. He was active in the CDXA in the mid-80s, before moving to PVRC country for five years. He recently moved back to Charlotte, where he hopes to continue the contest activity he grew to appreciate up North, having piloted W3LPL around from time-to-time. Don had all the current countries, but still enjoys DXing—that contest for very slow operators, as W4KFC once said.



Don't forget the CDXA Anual Christmas Party on Monday night December 13 at 6:30. The party will again be at the Branding Iron in Rock Hill. Talk in on 147.18. Located on Highway 21 just across the Catawba river bridge. Choice of Chicken or Beef and Full salad bar. (\$13.00). RSVP to N4ZC or AA4S.

Happy holidays to all!



The PILEUP
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